

(1) Notify the participant, in writing, of the date the appeals board will consider the appeal.

(2) Within 30 days after receiving the administering agency's notice, the participant may file a request to appear and present oral and other evidence. If the participant does not request an appearance, the administering agency appeals board will decide the dispute on the evidence available to them, including statements or briefs of the authorized representatives of the soil conservation district and NRCS. The administering agency shall notify the participants of the appeals board's decision in writing. There shall be no further administrative appeal of this decision.

(c) *Filing of documents.* A document is considered filed when it is received in the office of the person or agency concerned.

**§ 634.29 Violations.**

(a) *Actions causing violations.* The following actions constitute violation of a contract by a participant:

(1) Knowingly or negligently damaging or causing BMP's to become impaired.

(2) Adopting a land use or practice during the contract period which tends to defeat the purposes of the program.

(3) Failing to comply with the terms of the contract.

(4) Filing a false claim.

(5) Misusing authorizations for payment.

(b) *Contract termination as a result of violations.* (1) By signing a contract, the participant agrees to forfeit all rights to further cost-sharing payments under a contract and to refund all cost-share payments received, with interest, if the administering agency, with the concurrence of the State Conservationist, NRCS, determines that:

(i) There was a violation of the contract during the time the participant had control of the land; and

(ii) The violation was of such a nature as to warrant termination of the contract.

(2) The participant shall be obligated to refund all cost-share payments and all cost shares paid under authorizations, with interest, at the rates estab-

lished by the Secretary of the Treasury pursuant to Pub. L. 92-41, 85 Stat. 97.

(c) *Payment adjustments and refunds resulting from violations.* (1) By signing a contract, the participant agrees to refund cost-share payments received under the contract or to accept payment adjustments if the administering agency determines and the State Conservationist, NRCS, concurs that:

(i) There was a violation of the contract during the time the participant had control of the land; and

(ii) The nature of the violation does not warrant termination of the contract.

(2) Payment adjustments may include decreasing the rate of cost share, or deleting from the contract a cost-share commitment, or withholding cost-share payments earned but not paid. The participant who signs the contract may be obligated to refund cost-share payments.

**§ 634.30 Appeals in USDA administered projects.**

The participant in a USDA-administered RCWP project may appeal decisions of the administering agency in accordance with part 614 of this title.

[60 FR 67316, Dec. 29, 1995]

**§ 634.31 Appeals of contract violations.**

(a) *Scope.* This section prescribes the regulations dealing with contract violations. The Administrator, NRCS, reserves the right to revise or supplement any of the provisions of this section at any time if the action does not adversely affect the participant, or if the participant has been officially notified before this action is taken.

(b) *Determination by administering agency.* Upon notification that a contract violation may have occurred, the administering agency:

(1) Determines that a violation did not occur or that the violation was of such a nature that no further action is to be taken; or

(2) Determines that a violation did occur and the participant agrees to accept a written penalty of forfeiture, refund, payment adjustment, or termination. If no agreement is reached, further action is to be taken.